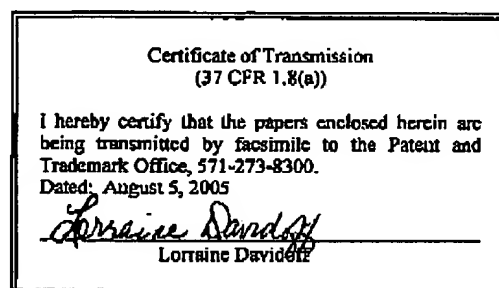


**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Appl. No. : 09/656,815 Confirmation No. 1848  
Applicant : Rodriguez, et al.  
Filed : September 7, 2000  
Art Unit : 3624  
Examiner : Ella Colbert  
Docket No. : 13647.0004  
Customer No. : 33649

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Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION**

Sir:

In response to the Office Action mailed May 5, 2005 (Paper No. 50205), Applicants respectfully submit the following arguments and amendments in the above-referenced application, and request entry thereof to place the application in condition for Allowability:

**Amendments to the Specification** begin on page 2 of this paper.

**Amendments to the Claims** are reflected in the listing of claims that begin on page 3 of this paper.

**Amendments to the Drawings** begin on page 7 of this paper and include both attached replacement sheets and annotated sheets showing changes.

**Remarks** begin on page 8 of this paper.

**Conclusion** begins on page 21 of this paper.

An **Appendix** including amended drawing figures attached following page 21 of this paper.